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ABSTRACT

Although a recent Mexican survey found that schooling was the public institution that inspired the most confidence, Mexican government figures for the past decade reveal high dropout rates, particularly at the primary level. This book casts light on this paradox by detailing various social relationships of schooling in two elementary schools in a working-class neighborhood of Guadalajara (Mexico). Chapters focus on effects of austerity (declining wages and cuts in educational expenditures) on educational performance; reform, decentralization, and modernization in the Mexican educational system; social context of the two schools and their administration, daily schedules, material resources, and curriculum content; teaching methods, discipline, classroom environment, teacher-student relationship, and student peer relationships; teachers' labor relations, local politics of teaching, and teacher supervision and assessment; educational and school attitudes of urban working-class families and family influences on children's achievement; student attitudes and the young child's world in and out of class; the study routine, teacher's personal authority, and students' attitudes toward teacher characteristics; and dynamics of the teacher-parent relationship. This book concludes that the relationship between home and school is at the heart of the school failure problem. The educational commitment of both parties is circumscribed, conditioned by household circumstances on the parents' side and by demanding work routines and service conditions on the teachers' side. Yet each expects unconditional commitment from the other, and overworked teachers often attempt to off-load some responsibilities onto parents. This greatly strains the relations of educational provision, resulting in school failure and dropouts. Contains 106 references. (SV)